

# RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS

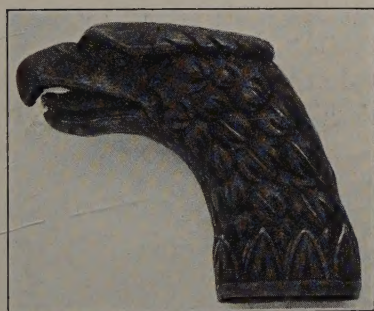
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VOL. XXV

JANUARY, 1932

No. 1

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PART OF THE HILT OF WASHINGTON'S SWORD

It was treasured for years by the Carroll family of Virginia and in 1861, was presented by members of that family to the First Rhode Island Regiment.

*In the Society's Museum.*

Issued Quarterly

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68 WATERMAN STREET, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

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ADDISON P. MUNROE, *President*    GILBERT A. HARRINGTON, *Treasurer*  
HOWARD W. PRESTON, *Secretary*    HOWARD M. CHAPIN, *Librarian*

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The Society assumes no responsibility for the statements or the opinions of contributors.

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Notes Regarding the Origin of Fort Ninigret  
in the Narragansett Country  
at Charlestown

By WILLIAM B. GOODWIN

In searching the historical archives of the settlement and occupation by the Dutch West India Company, from 1623 to 1674, of that part of New England and New York, originally known as the Dutch New Netherlands, the writer came across two salient excerpts which led him to believe that there must have been a somewhat earlier Dutch trading station and/or fort in the Narragansett Country in Rhode Island than has hitherto been generally accepted. Writers of Rhode Island history, with one exception, have indicated that the fort on the point of land on Charlestown Pond, which from time immemorial has been called Nini-



gret's Fort, was built by that Eastern Niantic chieftain, Ninigret, himself. The one exception was the writer, who stated that this fort had been originally built by the Dutch traders, assigning, however, no date. Moreover, the Point, itself, has become known by years of tradition as Dutch Point.

The following references to a fort, owned by the Dutch in the Narragansett Country prior to their purchase in 1635-'37 of what is now known as Dutch Island and which the Dutch called, "Quetenis," from its Indian name, are the basis which led to our asking permission of the Metropolitan Park Commission, under whose control this small park is held, to permit us to excavate in a preliminary manner for any possible evidence that this fort was not an Indian fort but a fort built by the Dutch prior to the time they acquired Dutch Island as a trading post.

The first interesting information concerning the Dutch fort, prior to the purchase of Quetenis Island and the location of a trading station at Sowams, the capital town of the Wampanoag Indians, is contained in a letter dated 1631, written in a tone of protest by the ambassador from the States General to the Court of King James in reply to the British Ambassador at the Court of The Hague. The British Ambassador had made a broad statement that the Dutch had no right, either by settlement or occupation, to the country of the New Netherlands. In his reply, the Dutch Ambassador said, "Before 1630, we had a fort and colony in the Narragansett Country which has been continuously occupied."

The next statement is from the Assembly of the XIX. to the States General, November, 1627, *Documentary History of New York*, Vol. 1, page 38:

"The last letters from New Netherland bring word, that the English of New Plymouth threaten to drive away those there, or disturb them in their settlement and little colony, notwithstanding our's hereto-

fore had tendered to them every good correspondence and friendship. They therefore request the aid of forty Soldiers for their defence. We would rather see it secured by friendly alliance."

The third statement is from Wassenaer's *Historical Account*: October, 1628, *Narratives of New Netherland*:

"On the north side are the English Brownists who maintain themselves very well and are much resorted to, supporting their reputation bravely with the natives, whom they do not fear, having acted strictly with these from the first, and so continuing.

"In the beginning of this year, war broke out between the Maikans near Fort Orange and the Maku-aes, but these beat and captured the Maikans and drove off the remainder who have settled towards the north by the Fresh River, so called; where they begin again to cultivate the soil; and thus the war has come to an end."

The fourth statement is found in the *Documentary History of New York*, Vol. 1, page 542:

"The limits of New Netherland, as claimed then, would be from Cape Hindlopen, on the south, to Cape Cod, on the east, including therein Long Island, situate right in front of New Netherland, whence it is separated by an arm of the sea, called the East river, which begins at Coney Island, in the North bay of the North river, and runs again into the sea at the eastward, near Fisher's Island, opposite the Pequatoos river, together with all other bays, rivers and islands situate westward of Cape Cod, and especially the island named Quetenis, lying in Sloop bay, which was purchased, paid for and taken possession of in the year 1637, on the Company's account."

Fifth, we have the statement found in the *Masachusetts Historical Society Collections*, Series 1, Vol. 1 (1811), page 271:

“The lands of the aforesaid river named Conecticott or Sicagothe were bought and possessed anno 1633 by the servants of the high and mighty of the comaunder of the Sickenamais named Nepaquate as Conquerer and Subduer of the foremencioned land and that by special Intreaty and Consent of the Right subdued owners of the nation present by and consent of Capitaine Awayas of our Comaunder or Sachem of Schalope bay which with large articles as by Credable Testimony Witnessing the deed may appear: and that long before the English had ben upon the River.”

The sixth statement is from the *Narratives of New Netherland*, 1647:

“About the same time (June, 1637) the Indian title to the Island of ‘Quotenis,’ near the ‘Roode Island,’ in Narragansett Bay, was secured for the West India Company, and a trading post was established there, under the superintendence of Abraham Pieterse. Not long afterwards, Pieterse obtained for the company the possession of another island, lying near the Pequod, or Thames River, which for many years after the settlement of Connecticut by the English, continued to be known as ‘the Dutchman’s Island.’ ”

The above evidence led me to examine the remains of this little fort at Charlestown with the keenest interest. It measures practically two hundred feet square. There are three bastions, the five-sided shape of which is very unusual. We can find no such shaped bastions in any of the books on fortifications which we have been able to locate. That the walls and bastions were built at one and the same time is apparent when the wall itself ends at three of the corners



to allow of an entry into the bastion. The fourth side, which is nearest towards the embankment of Charlestown Pond, did not need a bastion, and on digging, we found no evidence of one ever having been there.

From the oldest living inhabitant of that vicinity, a Mr. Church, we found that the present lines of the fort were pretty much as he had known them from boyhood up to and long before the marking of the site by the State Commission in the year 1881. Mr. Church told us that the entrance to the fort was on the south side near the southeast corner. On digging through the wall, which was evidently a restoration by the Commission, we found that the original wall had never been built across an apparent gateway. From this gateway, there led a diagonal path, southwest, to an ever-living spring which still furnishes the water for an adjoining dwelling. This spring is just above the high water mark.

Along this path, which is outside the walls of the fort, we found some of our most interesting relics, both Indian and Dutch, among which were a pair of knitting needles and a very much rusted Jews' harp, which, as everyone knows, is one of the trinkets the Dutch used in trading with the Indians. One piece of pottery was found along this trail, which compared with several of the more interesting pieces found more nearly in the center of the fort on the inside.

Now in order to find the construction of the fort, we ran transverse ditches on its eastern side. This we did from the bottom of the ditch, which surrounded the fort on all four sides, through to the inside level of the ditch, and here we obtained a very interesting picture of what the fort originally looked like. The builders first laid two parallel walls of glacial field stone about two feet apart. To the back of the inside walls of stone were then driven posts of unknown height, which could hardly be called palisadoes, the remains of which we found insitu in the earth. Of these decayed posts, which were circular, we found clear evidence that the grain of the wood ran in the perpendicular, prov-

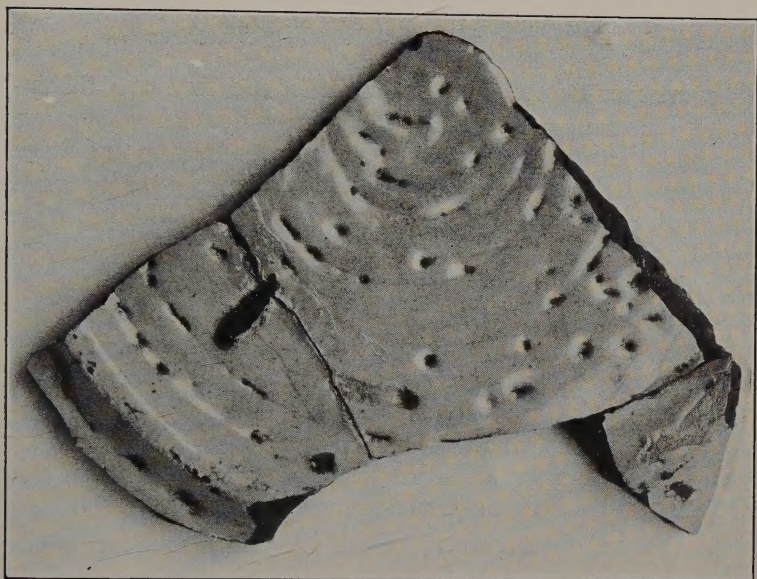
ing them to be upright. Back of that, however, on the inside was the evidence of planks laid transversely, whether to hold these posts together or to form a platform on the inside, it is hard to say.

The next step in regard to the construction of the wall was to excavate a ditch with sufficient width so that the earth would be thrown over the whole. The most amazing discovery at this point was that the wall, itself, as far as the earth was concerned, had been raised between two feet, six inches and three feet at some later date. We should say in both instances the grass mould was of the same age. So if the fort goes back to the date we assign to it, 1627, there would be nearly as much decayed roots forming clay as on the original. Whether that means that the walls of the fort were raised halfway between 1627 and 1927, or the present date, is, of course, problematical, or whether a Dutch fort had been erected upon a previous fort. The nearest answer to this problem is that the walls had eroded at some time since the fort was first built and had been restored.

Mr. Church told us that there was a line of stones on top of the fort which were taken away by the Commission. Unfortunately, Mr. Church is the only living man to give us any testimony as to what the fort looked like before the Commission took it over, but following his statements, we found him apparently truthful in every way. As for a man eighty-eight years old, his mind is quite clear and his recollections were in more or less detail. For instance, we were looking for a block-house in the center of this fort, if it was built in 1627, for in 1616 we have the record of the dimensions of the original Dutch Fort Nassau on Castle Island in the Hudson River opposite the present Albany, New York. These notes, translated from the Dutch, are as follows:

“Fort Nassau was fifty-eight feet wide between the walls and built as a square. The moat is eighteen feet wide.”





FRAGMENTS OF A BLUE AND WHITE PLATE ORNAMENTED  
WITH LETTER "R"

*Unearthed at Fort Ninigret*

It is further noted that the house in the fort was thirty-eight feet long and twenty-six feet wide. However, on digging all around the marker boulder, erected by the State Commission when the fort was taken over as a park by the State of Rhode Island, we found no direct evidence of a building which might have had a chimney, and Mr. Church assured us that in his lifetime there never had been such a central building. On the other hand, just outside to the north of the artificial mound in the center, containing the boulder marker of the site, we found the circular depression which we took to possibly be a well. We hired an experienced man, Mr. Babcock, an Indian, who had for forty years been digging wells in the various house sites in the vicinity of the fort on Charlestown Pond.

When we started to dig about this circular depression, we at first immediately thought we had discovered a well. There were laid in a circular form, about four feet in diameter, three layers of field stone. Beneath this, however, these circular layers of stone ceased, although we dug to a matter of twelve feet, and would have expected, if we found the bottom of the well, to have gone to at least twenty-five feet. We found no further positive evidence that this circular wall of stones continued on down. However, at nine and a half feet, we became sure that there had been some excavation here and that it had been filled up with boulders and glacial sand and gravel, of which the whole Point is composed. At the nine and a half feet level, we found several stones which showed signs of fire and to one side of which stones adhered a layer of clay. Inasmuch as there was no clay anywhere in the pit dug down to twelve or more feet, we came to the conclusion that these stones were out of some chimney which at one time or another had been erected on the place and that the well, if it had been a well, had been partly covered and filled in as far as the rocks which had formerly been a chimney are concerned. Beyond this, there was no evidence that there had ever been a block-

house and no woodwork except the back side of the rampart, all of which was in an entirely decayed condition.

The five-sided bastions were not made like the main walls. They were made of stone, much of it flat stone laid one above another and thoroughly covered with earth. The corners of the bastions are clearly marked. The interior of the bastions were shallow indentures in which men could lie for defense of all the four sides of the fort, shooting parallel to the main wall. The same under surface was found in these bastions as in the inside of the fort, itself. As we had nothing further to guide us—the pits that were dug were of various shapes and sizes—we had to trust more or less to luck to find anything that would give us evidence of the age of the structure itself.

We thought for some time there had been a pathway on the east side down to the oyster beds at the foot of the steep bluff on which the fort stands in the harbor itself. Digging into this slight depression, we found that this was merely a drainage erosion. From the main path, digging all along the rectangle of stones, upon which the marker stone in the center of the fort stands, we found some of our most interesting relics. Besides bits of pottery, we found iron implements of various sorts, including a badly eroded shovel, axes, and curious wedges, which must have been a very early form of tomahawk.

The writer made a personal visit a short time ago to the great museum at Fort Ticonderoga, the site of so many of the early French and American wars. As Ticonderoga was not built before 1756, it was not surprising to find that none of the iron implements were of the same form as those found at Fort Ninigret. Pieces of very old iron which looked like knives or daggers were found, as were the fragments of pottery at an average depth of three and a half feet underground. Very little of any kind was found above three feet. One of the best authorities in Connecticut, Mr. Bull, passed on these findings and stated that no such iron had been found in the early shell heaps along the shores of



the Sound between the Pawcatuck River and the river towns of Connecticut. In these same excavations, he had found Jews' harps and other Dutch trading relics.

Now we were fortunate to find a great number of broken clay pipes. On a number of these pipes were the initials of the maker. I think we can say we have from six to eight separate specimens. We are expecting to send these to Holland because we understand that the early pipe manufacturers of Holland put their initials on their pipes. These pipes are of at least five different shapes and sizes. We found a number of specimens of trading copper, made of an alloy, known to have been used by the Dutch in trading with the Indians. We also found soapstone Indian pipes with native copper bands. We found specimens of linen and of what we believe to be trading cloth. It will take chemical tests to ascertain the proportion of woolen or linen in any of these fragments.

Our greatest find, in our humble estimation, was three fragments of a fairly large platter which we at first thought were parts of a Delft Dutch tile, but which on examination, and being finally able to fit the three fragments together, we found the whole outline of a plate, on the top side in a circle of blue and white was the letter "R," a little over an inch and a quarter in diameter. In addition, we found another fragment of pottery in blue and white where the blue lines were parallel in a waving pattern. We found other small fragments of blue and white pottery, none of which were large enough to give us a true line on them. We found old glass in large amounts, one piece of which was evidently a part of a tumbler as it was ornamented in yellow and red bands, burnt into the glass.

At our request the United States Government sent Colonel F. M. Morgan from Fort Adams in Newport harbor to assist us in attempting to find the age of the fort from the soil. Over the entire inside of the fort for a depth of from

six inches to two feet and more was a heavy black mould which we had presumed was leaf mould. Colonel Morgan, after an examination of all of our pits, told us it was grass mould rather than leaf mould. The old writers, describing the Narragansett Country in this vicinity, all state it was more or less park like and we note that the Indians kept it burned over. We found no evidence down to three or four feet in our excavation which would lead us to believe that trees of any size ever stood on this Point.

One of the striking results of our excavation was that, while we found a great number of objects, all of which tended to be Dutch in character, or at least foreign implements, we found only less than half a dozen arrowheads. This is interesting from the point of view that in the level, surrounding country of the original Narragansett-Niantic Reservation, one can find arrowheads everywhere.

As you may know, we have the very pertinent declaration by Captain John Mason that he came from Saybrook Fort in the summer of 1637, and making no mention of a Dutch trading post or fort on Dutch Island, he landed opposite the Narragansetts' main village, eighteen or twenty-six miles away. There he spent the night endeavoring to obtain the aid of the Narragansett chieftain to assist him in his attack on the Pequot Fort at Mystic. From there he marched his little army of ninety men and followers over land to a place where he said a chief, named Ninigret, lived in a fort. This fort he surrounded, warning none of the Indians to come out until he was joined the next morning by the Narragansett warriors who were to go with him and who persuaded Ninigret to go with them. With him, of course, he had Uncas, chief of the Mohegans, and Wequashcook, a Pequot chieftain and brother of Ninigret from the Niantic country in Connecticut. This completed his Indian following. From there he marched twelve miles to the Pawcatuck River and so on to take the Mystic fort by a surreptitious route from the north. History tells us that Miantonomo, Uncas,

Ninigret, and Wequashcook were all leaders of this Indian following.

We also made some attempt to excavate under a house from about a half to three-quarters of a mile to the west of the fort. Eight or nine years ago in digging for the foundation of the house, there was found a cannon<sup>1</sup> and a sword of European manufacture lying about a foot and a half on top of six or eight Indian graves. We found the man, who made the excavation for this cellar, and he has drawn a plan for us. He told us that there were still other Indian graves unexcavated because the owner, Mr. Arnold, only wished to disturb the ground in a section of a part of the cellar under this house, owned at the present time by his niece and nephew.

Through the courtesy of your librarian, we had excellent photographs made of the cannon and sword from all points of view. We took these photographs with us to New York and had the two best experts on armor, living to-day, give us an opinion of their age. One of them showed us a stand of sixty like swords, none of which were exactly like the sword found under the Arnold house. This gentleman dated the sword as at least back of 1600. However, at the Metropolitan Museum, the Curator of Armor, Mr. Grancsay, gave us as his unquestioned opinion that the sword could well date back to 1550. In each instance, both gentlemen declared the cannon to be of a very early breechblock type. In fact, the cannon could go back to the fifteenth century. Now we are convinced from walking all over the ground in the vicinity of Dutch Point, Fort Ninigret, and the old Indian Reservation, that the cannon and sword came from the original Narragansett burying ground. Until, however, we find something of like fashion within Fort Ninigret itself, we are hardly ready to say that the cannon and sword came from Fort Ninigret, but we are keeping in mind the possibility that there were two forts on

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<sup>1</sup>Illustrated in R. I. H. S. Coll. XV, op. p. 24.



Dutch Neck, one built after the other without disturbing the first, so that it very well may be that we may have found one of the very early existing fortifications in America. Before we make any final decision in this matter, we feel that whenever it is opportune that the Metropolitan Park Commission should set aside a sufficient sum of money to pay for excavating the entire interior of the fort to a depth of at least four feet and, also, to continue the work of going down to the water line of the presumed well inside the center of the fort.

Now it is a curious coincidence that the one Dutchman, who might be responsible for this fort, was Isaac de Rasier, secretary of the Dutch West India Company, who came out in 1626-'27 to investigate on behalf of the Company's unfortunate conditions in the government at Manhattan. He came, as is well-known, as far as the top of Buzzard's Bay and paid a call on the leaders of the Plymouth Plantation. He makes a clear statement that he does not understand why the authorities at Manhattan have not done more to develop the trade with the Indians. This letter was written in 1627.

Now the initial of his name, you will note, is "R". By a curious coincidence the only account, prior to 1600, that we have of an exploration of the shores of Narragansett Bay and Rhode Island, or possibly Long Island Sound, is of two expeditions, the latter part of both the accounts of which is lost to us: that is, after getting to a certain point in the story of what these two expeditions did, the manuscript abruptly ends. This is the account of the third voyage of Jacques Cartier in 1541-'42. He left the port of St. Johns on the Island of Newfoundland on June 14th to return to St. Malo in France. He did not arrive until sometime in October, or at least there is no record of his arrival until late in October. As he was leaving the harbor of St. Johns, he was met by the second part of his expedition, delayed a whole year. He is met by Sieur de Roberval, who demands that he stay and go back with him to Cap Rouge on the

St. Lawrence River. This Cartier refused to do and Roberval goes on to Cap Rouge there to winter in 1542-'43. Roberval had a remarkable pilot for his ships, Jean Alfonsce, and we have a number of accounts, one of which is claimed to have been written, or to have been dictated by Alfonsce, himself; also, a number of maps of the coast of North America from Cape Breton down to Brazil. Is there by any chance a connection between the "R" of the plate and the "R", the initial letter of Sieur de Roberval's name, the leader of this expedition? However, between 1543 at the end of the year and the return of Roberval, there is a sudden stop in Roberval's separate account of the expedition. In both instances, these narratives end abruptly just at the time we would like to know what they were doing in those five or six months of their departure from New France and their return to Old France.

From 1543 to 1600, we now have a number of narratives and many hints that the French, Norman, and Basque sailors came to our shores of New England. Let us give you one instance. Going back to the first Dutch map of 1616, there is marked on this map: at Fort Nassau on the upper Hudson River:

"By as far as one can understand by what the Maquaas say and show, the French came with sloops as high up as their country to trade with them."

Now by no understanding could these French traders have reached the Mohawk or upper Hudson via the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain and Lake George. Such French visits would have been made up the Hudson River. As a further proof, we have Andrew Thivet's clear statement that before 1556 he visited a French fort twelve leagues up the Hudson River so that there is a bare chance that the French may have had something to do with this fort in which we are so much interested.

Now I have given you the above as a stranger who has no

background of the Narragansett Country's history but what he has obtained by research. All of the known English voyages after 1600 do not describe the Charlestown Pond country although Gosnold in 1602 built a little fort on Cuttyhunk Island. There can be no confusion between Fort Ninigret and a possible fort, all signs of which are obliterated, on the little island in the pond on Cuttyhunk.

We would very much like to have it understood that our only conclusions are at this time that there is a real possibility that the Dutch built Fort Ninigret sometime after 1627 and before 1630 and that it was abandoned by them when their trade was destroyed by the long Four Years War between the Pequots and the Narragansett Indians. In consequence, because of the silting up of the harbor of Charlestown Pond, the Dutch when they returned in 1637 established themselves by purchase on a much safer situation: namely, Dutch Island. The main Dutch trade had always been up the Hudson River. No other trade anywhere was comparable with it.

In 1624 the Dutch attempted to colonize the Fort of Good Hope on the Connecticut, presumably at the mouth of the river, Fort Nassau on the Delaware, and Fort Orange on the Hudson, where previously in 1623 they had erected little trading forts. Two years later under Peter Minuit, all these three sets of colonists were by order returned to Manhattan Island where a much more pretentious stone fort, to be named Fort Amsterdam, was in the process of construction. Very shortly after, Fort Nassau on the Delaware was destroyed. What became of this first little fort on the Connecticut is unknown to us.

There seems a fair probability that Isaac de Rasier either built this Dutch fort on Dutch Neck near Charlestown Pond or occupied an earlier fort about which some day we may have more particulars. In the meantime, while awaiting the result of a particular search of the records of the seaports of the Basque Provinces in Spain and France, much might be ascertained if a thorough investigation of the



ground within and adjoining Fort Ninigret was undertaken under scientific methods of exploration.

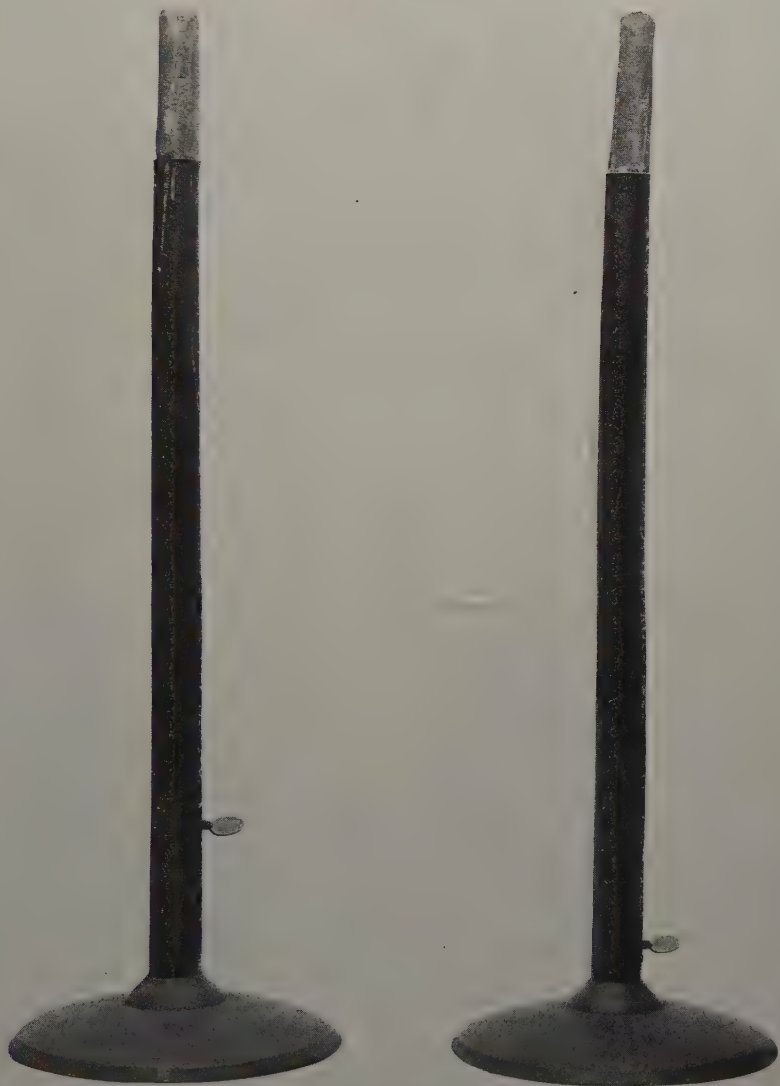
Since setting down the above incidents, connected with our search, we have shown the broken blue and white plate with the letter "R" in its center to the best American authority on Delft, Mr. Hans Middlekoopf, of New York City. Mr. Middlekoopf at once declared it to be very early Dutch Delft. Through fifty years of experience in handling nothing but Dutch antiques and ceramics, Mr. Middlekoopf, born in Holland, may be termed an authority. From specimens in his private collection of Delft, obtained forty or more years ago, he showed the writer the characteristics of early Delft, dating from their origin from the Spanish occupation of Holland between 1545 and 1574. The Spaniards brought with them their own pottery and established a majolica ware out of which the Dutch evolved the later Delft. These fragments of the platter, Mr. Middlekoopf declared without hesitation to have been made in the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

Summing up then, we have the quasi evidence that here in the vicinity of this fort, or within the fort, itself, have been found a cannon, dating back to the fifteenth century, a sword, dating back to the middle of the sixteenth century, and pottery dating back to the first quarter of the seventeenth century, together with iron implements, used evidently in trade, of such a nature as never have been dug up in the northeastern part of the United States.

## New Publications of Rhode Island Interest

*An Ethnic Survey of Woonsocket, Rhode Island*, by Bessie Bloom Wessel, 1931, 290 pages.

*Programme of Celebrations in Commemoration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Founding of Scituate, Rhode Island, 1931*, with many illustrations of old houses.



These candlesticks and candles were used at a ball given in honor of George Washington at Hacker's Hall in Providence, on August 18, 1790, during the brief visit of Washington to the city.

*In the Society's Museum.*

*Rope Yarns from the Old Navy* by Rear Admiral Caspar F. Goodrich, New York, 1931, Naval History Society, Vol. XI, contains a chapter relating to the Naval Academy at Newport, R. I. in 1861.

*The Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* for October, 1931, contains an article on the Bull family, written by Henry Bull who died in 1841.

*The New England Quarterly* for October, 1931, contains two articles of Rhode Island interest: "Cotton and Williams Debate Toleration" by Henry B. Parkes; and "Aaron Lopez, Merchant of Newport," by Bruce M. Bigelow.

## Notes

The following persons have been elected to membership in the Society:

Mr. Charles H. Keyes  
Mr. William T. Peck

Mr. Webster Knight  
R. F. Haffenreffer

An account of George Washington's visits to Providence by Howard W. Preston will be found in the *Rhode Island Historical Society Collections* for October, 1926.



Ladies

Mount Vernon March 12<sup>th</sup> 1800.

In granting the request contained in your sympathetic letter of the 24<sup>th</sup> of February I beg you to be assured of the grateful sensibility with which I received your expressions of condolence and kind wishes for my happiness.

I innumerable testimonies of respect and veneration paid to the memory of my dear departed Husband, or if universal sympathy in any afflicting loss could afford consolation mine would be complete. But while I see and acknowledge these with a grateful heart, I find consolation only in the bosom of that being by whose dispensation I have been afflicted.

That your wishes may be exemplary, that your passage through life may be marked with the blessings of Heaven, and that happiness hereafter may be your portion. prays

Mrs Julia Brown  
Miss B. Howell  
Sarah Haley  
Abel Chase

Your Friend and obedient  
Servant  
Martha Washington—

Letter from Martha Washington containing a lock of  
George Washington's hair.

In the Society's Museum.

## Revolutionary Orders of 1780

*(Original Manuscript owned by Frederick S. Peck.)*

Details of a Detachment from Col. Clinton's Regiment to get aid immediately August 4th 1780.

1 Serjeant 1 Corporal 15 privates  
1 Capt. 1 Serjeant 1 Corporal 20 privates  
From Capt Carrs Company For the Boat Service.

After Orders Augst. 4th 1780.

Genel. Stanton is to take immediate Command at Butts Hill.

Genel. Miller at Bristol both to do all in their power For mutual Support of all the Posts.

The Adjutant & Quart. Mastr. Genel. to Remain. A frequent communication to be had with the Major Genel. as he will give orders in urgent Cases but not for matters of the Post.

Troops in Bristol are to be in as good Order as possible to Cross the Ferry upon Alarm or Otherwise if orderd.

Seven Hundred men to Cross to Butts Hill as Soon as possible, provisions & other Stores to be Sent to Butts Hill from Bristol as Occasion may Require.

Six of the Horse from papasquash to be Sent to Genel. Heath & Four to Genel. Stanton as expressed.

General Orders Bristol August 4th 1780.

The General is very much Surprised to heare Such a firing of guns in Camp it is not only a waste of ammunition but very unsoldierlike he therefore orders every oficer to take notice and Confine any Soldier that may discharge his gun in Camp at the main Guard where he may Depend on being punished as Such Disobedience of orders deserves the Boat

Guard at Bristol ferry is to draw from the Commissary at 3 oClock this after-noon half a pint of Rum pr man and all the other Troops at this post are to draw a gill pr man to be delivered to the Order of the Commanding Officers of Regiments or Detachments.

### Details for Guard

the Guard to be furnished from Colo. Peck's Regiment to Consist of 1 Sub. 2 Serjt. 2 Corporals 21 privats.

the Several Brigades will also furnish from their Artillery officers and Matrosses in the following proportion.

Viz. Holdens 1 Lt. 1 Serjt. 1 Corporal 9 Matrosses

Stantons 1 Serjt. 1 Gunner 7 Matrosses

Lippet 1 Capt. 1 Serjt. 1 Corporal 1 Drum 1 Gun 1 fife 3 Matrosses

Miller 1 Corporal 5 Matrosses.

The Commanding officers of Regiments and Independent Companies will Direct that the ammunition and Camp furniture to be Returned into the Publick Stores reserving sufficiently for the officers and men furnished by the Respective Corps those who are furloughd will not be intild to pay nor Rations during their absence the officers and Soldiers Remaining on the Ground may Rest assured that they will be relieved within twelve days time Capt. General Returns both officers and men his warmest acknowledgments the Several Brigades and independent Companys at this Post with Privates in the Field. Near the meeting House at half after Six oClock tomorrow morning and the Troops at Butts Hill Praid at 9 oClock.

Bristol Head Quarters 6th August 1780.

His Excellency the Capt. General hath Directed that the Number of Officers and men in the Several Brigades and independent Companys to Remain on Duty be furnished ea the following proportion

Viz.

Genel. Holdens Brigade 1 Major 1 Capt. 3 Subs. 5 Serjts.  
5 Corporals 2 fifs 1 Drum and 99 Privates. General Stan-  
tons Brigade 1 Lt Colo. 2 Cpts. 5 Subs 6 Serjents 6 Corp-  
orals 2 Drums 2 fifs and 159 Privas.

Lippets Brigade Capt. Sub. Serjt. Corp. Drums fifs. Priva.

	3	5	7	7	3	2	213
Millers	2	3	6	6	2	2	94

Independent Companies under Command of Colo. Day  
Capt. Sub Serjents Corp Drum fifs Privats.

1	2	3	3	1	1	57
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Exclusive of the above Number of officers and Soldiers  
from the Several Brigades the following proportion from  
their Respective of Horse are to be furnished first

	Sub	Corpl.	Trumpets	
Holdens Do	1	1	1	5 Privats
		Serjt.		
Stantons Do	1	1	1	10 Privats
	Capt		Corpl.	
Lippets Do	1	1	1	12 Privats
Millers Do		1		5 Privats

Head Quarters August 5th 1780  
Middletown.

Generl. Varnum Considering the very busy Season of year  
and the Length of time the Troop of the Rhode Island line  
had been on the Ground at the Respective posts and from  
their Patience and assistance in every kind of Duty being  
fully Persuaded that they will Court Danger with eager-  
ness Should an attack be made by the Enemy is Disposed to  
give them every indulgence in his Power the Generals hav-



ing therefore Consulted with the Brigades of the Line and Receiving orders of his Excellency the Governor will grant furlows to a large portion of them upon Condition that they agree among themselves who shall be the Persons to obtain the Priviledge the Commanding Officers of Corps will be instructed in what Proportion the furlows shall be Given and upon application to the Major General they Shall be given accordingly But is Expected that Leave of absence will not prevent any from immediately Returning when the Signal Shall be given of the Enemies approach.  
Copy Jno Handy Aid De Campe.

NOTE. These orders were issued in connection with the military manoeuvres resulting from the appearance of the British fleet off Narragansett Bay, sometimes referred to as the alarm of July, 1780.

## Captain John Rous, R. N.

*(Continued from vol. XXIV, p. 176)*

Illustrative Documents selected from the Rouse Papers, recently presented to the Society by G. Andrews Moriarty, F. S. A.

### I

#### DEED TO JOHN ROUSSE

On August 31, 1743, Samuel Vernon and Ann Sanford both of Newport, R. I., shopkeepers, executors of the last will and testament of Samuel Vernon, late of said Newport, Esq<sup>r</sup>, deceased, for 700 pounds currant money of the colony old tenor, deeded to John Rousse "Two Certain Lotts of Land adjoyning together and both together containing in the Front upon the Street One Hundred and Nineteen feet be the Same more or less and Extending from said Street Easterly into the Cove or Salt Water and

are the Ninety Seventh and Ninety Eighth Lotts in Number of the first Division of an allotment of a Tract of Land called Eastons Point Situate lying and being in the Town of Newport aforesaid of which Jacob Mott and Thomas Cornel of Portsmouth and William Barker and Samuel Thurston of Newport all in the Colony of Rhode Island Yeomen were Original Proprietors Both said Lotts as they lie together are bounded as followeth Viz<sup>t</sup>. Westerly upon a Street Easterly upon the Cove or Salt Water Northerly on the thirty Second Lott and Southerly on the One hundred and Sixty first Lott of said Division of sd Allotment Or however otherwise the Same may be butted and bounded or Reputed to be butted and bounded Reference being had to the Lotters Return together with the Map or Platts of sd Allotment may fully Appear Together with the Dwelling House thereon and all other the Buildings Wharf Improvements Rights Profits Priviledges and Appurtenances to the Same belonging or in any wise appertaining To have and to hold the said Granted and Bargained Premisses with all the Rights Profits Priviledges & Appurtenances to the same belonging or in any wise appertaining unto him the said John Rousse his Heirs and Assigns for ever to his & their own sole proper use Benefits and Behoof for ever To be holden of the said Jacob Mott Thomas Cornel William Barker & Samuel Thurston Proprietors as aforesaid and their Heirs as of the Manner of fee farm in free and Common Socage by fealty only in lieu of all Service it being Seated and Improved according to Regulation Yielding & Paying therefore to the said Jacob Mott Thomas Cornel William Barker & Samuel Thurston the said Proprietors and to the Survivers & Survivor of them & to the Heirs & assigns of the Survivers & Survivor of them at or upon the twenty fifth Day of the first Month called March in every Year at or near the Town of Newport aforesaid for ever the full and just Sum of Forty Shillings in Currant Passable Money of New England as shall Pass from Time to Time at the Yearly Payments and as the said Jacob Mott Thomas

Cornel William Barker & Samuel Thurston the Survivors and Survivor of them or the Heirs or Assigns of the Survivors & Survivor of them and so always from Time to Time as their said Heirs or assigns or the Survivors or Survivor of them shall further Impower by Dispositions to Person or Persons or to the Survivors or Survivor of them or to the Heirs or Assigns of the Survivors or Survivor of them the said John Rouse his Heirs Exec<sup>rs</sup>. Admin<sup>rs</sup>. or Assigns shall yield and pay therefore to such Person or Persons so appointed and Impowered to accept in the Tenor above successively from Time to Time the Sum of forty Shillings as above the said Service at or upon the Day first above prefixed in every Year at or near the Town of Newport aforesaid for ever And We the Said Samuel Vernon and Ann Sanford for our Selves our Heirs Exec<sup>rs</sup>. & Admin<sup>rs</sup>. Do Covenant Promise & Grant to & with the said John Rouse his Heirs & Assigns that at & before the Ensealing hereof we have good Right full Power and Lawfull Authority to Grant Bargain and Sell all the above Granted & Bargained Premisses in Manner as abovesaid And that the said John Rouse his Heirs & Assigns shall and may from Time to Time and at all Times for ever hereafter by force Virtue of these sd Presents Lawfully Peaceably and quietly have hold Use Occupy Possess and Enjoy all the above granted & Bargained Premisses free and Clear & freely & clearly acquitted exonerated & Discharged of & from all Incumbrance whatsoever (the above mentioned Yearly Rent or Service of forty Shillings thereout Issuing to the Proprietors their Heirs & assigns for ever only excepted)."

NOTE: This document shows the form of a colonial deed for land in which the original proprietors, or their successors, retained an interest to the amount of a small annual payment. For reference to obsolete forms of early land tenure and transfer, see R. I. H. S. C. XII, p. 65, *The Tenement on Conimicut*, and R. I. H. S. C. XXIII, p. 1, *Foreclosure of Mortgage by Suit of Trespass and Ejectment*.

## II

## A FLAG OF TRUCE PASS.

Rhode Island to wit.

By the Honble Gideon Wanton Esqr. Governor Capt. General & Commander in Chief in & over the English Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England.

To all to whom these Presents shall come Greeting.

FORASMUCH as it is the Usage and Custom of Nations at War to exchange such Prisoners as the Parties take from each other And to that End the Subjects & Vessels of one Prince are by Way of Truce admitted into the Territories & Ports of the Prince with whom he is in Enmity. And as there are several of the Subjects of the French King & the King of Spain now Prisoners of War in this Colony who are desirous to be exchanged. Now to the End such an Exchange may be made for the Reciprocal Advantage of those who by the Fortune of War have been deprived of their Liberty. Be it known & manifest that I the said Gideon Wanton in the name of my Sovereign Lord George the Second by the Grace of God King of Great Britain &c. do hereby Authorize & Impower John Rousse Master of the Sloop Sarah of the Burthen of Forty five Tons or thereabouts to take on Board said Sloop all the Subjects of the French King & the King of Spain that are Prisoners of War in this Colony & such others as he may find else where with all Stores & Necessaries that the Voyage may require & with them proceed directly to the Island of Hispaniola with a Flag of Truce & there deliver up said Prisoners & receive such English Prisoners as shall be given in Exchange for them or such other Prisoners as have been heretofore released without Consideration by this Colony since the present War with France & Spain. And I do hereby strictly Inhibit & Forbid the said John Rousse to take on Board any



Military Force or Warlike Stores not doubting that the Supream Officer there & all whom it doth or may Concern will grant him all due & lawful Assistance and Protection & also according to the Established Custom supply him with all Neccessaries (that the Voyage may require) sufficient for the bringing such English Prisoners into their own Country. And I do also desire & request all Commanders of Vessels of Force & others that may meet said Sloop on its Passage either going or returning to exempt said Sloop & the People thereof from all manner of Force and Constraint according to the Laws of Nations. And that the Truth hereof may be Established I set my Name and cause the Seal of the Colony aforesaid to be affixed hereunto at Newport in said Colony the Eighteenth Day of November in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and forty seven And Twenty first of the Reign of my Sovereign aforesaid . . . . .

GID: WANTON

Sealed with the Seal of the Colony aforesaid  
By Order of his Honor the Governor  
Tho Ward Secry

NOTE. A flag of truce pass or commission was issued to the captain of a vessel to allow him to proceed, exempt from capture, between the ports of two hostile countries in order to effect the exchange of prisoners of war. The vessel was usually called a flag of truce. A certificate showing that the flag of truce carried no contraband was also issued. A certificate of this sort, which is in the library of the Rhode Island Historical Society, was printed in *Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll.* vol. 69, p. 78.

### III

#### THE WILL OF JOHN ROUSSE

In the Name of God Amen

The Seventh Day of April in the twenty second year of his Majesty's Reign George the second King of Great Britain

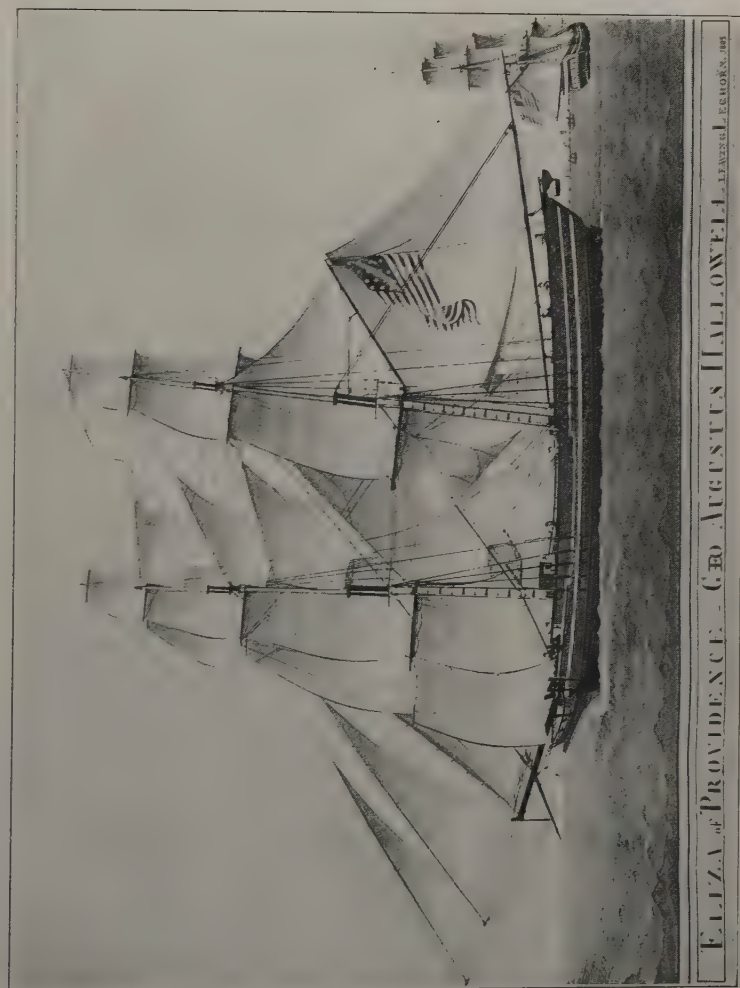
&c. Annoqe Dom: 1749 I John Rousse of Newport in the County of Newport & Colony of Rhode Island Mariner being well in Body and of perfect Mind and Memory Thanks be given unto God But calling to Mind the Mortality of my Body and knowing That it is appointed for all Men once to die Do make and Ordain this my last Will and Testament That is say Principally and first of all I Give and Recommend my Soul into the hands of God that gave it and my Body I Commit to the Earth to be decently buried at the Discretion of my Executrix herein after mentioned and as touching such Worldly Estate wherewith It haths Pleased God to bless me in this Life I Give and Dispose of the same in the following manner & form:

IMPRIMIS I Will that all my just Debts & Funeral Charges be well and truly Paid in some convenient Time after my Decease.

ITEM I Give & Bequeath unto my Wife Jane Rousse the Use & Improvement of all my Estate both Real and Personal for & during the Time she shall remain my Widow, which shall be in Lieu of her Thirds of my Estate.

ITEM I Give Devise and Bequeath into my Son Thomas Rousse and my two Daughters Jane Rousse & Sarah Rousse all my Estate whatsoever both Real and Personal to be Equally divided amongst them and to be Enjoyed by them their Heirs and Assigns forever at the Decease or Marriage of my said Wife that which shall first happen.

LASTLY I Nominate Constitute and Appoint my said Wife Jane Rousse to be my Executrix of this my last Will and Testament And I do hereby Utterly Disallow Revoke and Disannul all and every other Wills Legacies Bequests and Executors by me at any Time heretofore made named



THE SNOW ELIZA OF PROVIDENCE.

*Courtesy of Brown & Ives*

Willed or Bequeathed ratifying allowing and Confirming  
this & no other to be my last Will & Testament In Witness  
whereof I have hereunto Set my hand & Seal the Day &  
Year first above written.

JOHN ROUSSE

Signd Seald & Declard by the  
said John Rousse to be his last Will  
& Testament in the presence of us

William Broughton

Thomas Wevar

William Allin

*(To be continued)*

## Bowen Family Notes

By CHARLES SHEPARD

In the Heraldic Notes on the Bowen family, printed in the *Collections* for July, 1931, pages 132-133, the statement is made that Dr. Richard Bowen, father of Jabez, was "son of Thomas Bowen of Salem," who was son of Richard Bowen of Rehoboth. Following the statement in Savage's Geneological Dictionary of New England, Thomas Bowen of Salem is frequently confused, as here, with the contemporary Thomas of Rehoboth and New London, and since the latter was a direct ancestor of that branch of the Bowen family which was most prominent in Rhode Island, a few notes on the two Thomases may not be amiss.

Thomas Bowen of Essex County, Mass., who was a resident of Marblehead and previously may have lived at Salem, appears frequently in the printed Records and Files of the Essex County Quarterly Courts. As nearly as can be estimated from his conflicting ages stated at different times, he seems to have been born about 1621-25, and at



least as early as 1646 he had a wife Elizabeth who was about the same age. About 1645 he had been a servant of Devereux. In 1642 he testified in court at Salem, which is the earliest record of him that I have yet found.

The printed court records further show that his wife Elizabeth was alive as late as 1662, while Thomas himself was still living at Marblehead in 1681. Pope's Pioneers states that administration was granted on his estate in 1705. He seems to have had children, but I have never had an opportunity to follow this branch of the family further than enough to make certain that he was a different man from Thomas of Rehoboth.

The other Thomas Bowen, the father of Dr. Richard Bowen, was apparently the youngest of the four known sons of the elder Richard Bowen of Rehoboth, who was buried there in February 1674/5. It is reasonable to guess that he was born about 1633, so that he was nearly if not fully ten years younger than the other Thomas of Marblehead. He moved to New London, apparently about 1657, was living there in 1662, and still owned his land in New London when he made his will in 1663, having then returned to Rehoboth where he apparently died. His will may be found in the *Mayflower Descendant* for 1914, vol. 16, page 128, and that of his father is printed in vol. 17, at page 247.

No record has been discovered, so far as I am aware, which identifies this Thomas of Rehoboth in any way with Salem or any other place in Essex County. Confusion between the two men of the same name has been easy, especially since both had wives of the same name, Elizabeth. The widow of the Rehoboth Thomas married Samuel Fuller of Plymouth. Her identity, long sought, is apparently still unknown, though it has been suggested without proof that she was a Brewster. My own guess is that Thomas Bowen met and married his wife Elizabeth during his years at New London, and that further research should be among the Connecticut records, rather than among those of the Brewsters or other Massachusetts families.

A most promising clue (printed in the Fuller genealogy of 1910, page 185) is the power of attorney of 1667 from Elizabeth Fuller of Plymouth, sometime wife of Thomas Bowen, late of Rehoboth, and Samuel Fuller of Plymouth, to their brother-in-law John Prentice of New London, blacksmith, to sell Thomas Bowen's land in New London. Thorough research upon the ramifications of the Prentices of New London, by the Bowen and Fuller descendants of the elusive Elizabeth, might yield rich rewards in authentic information. Apparently it has never been attempted by them.

As I am compiling a genealogy of the Bowen family, with special though not exclusive reference to the descendants of Richard Bowen of Rehoboth, I would appreciate information on this family from any sources, especially entries from family Bibles and data from other private records.

Since the heraldic tombstone of Jabez Bowen has recently been described in the *Collections* for July, it may be especially appropriate at this time to mention the family tradition that the same coat-of-arms was cut on the tombstone of the immigrant Richard Bowen of Rehoboth, buried February, 1674/5. Search in recent years has failed to find any trace of the stone. Any further information tending to show that the traditional stone either did or did not exist, would be welcome.

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PROVIDENCE

# WASHINGTON EXHIBITION

February 15 to 21

· 1932 ·



In commemoration of the Washington bicentennial the Rhode Island Historical Society will hold a loan exhibition of objects relating to George Washington, during the week of February 15 to 21, 1932, at the Society's building.